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Journal - Office of Legislative Counsel
Wednesday - 8 September 1971

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4. [] Called Jim Gehrig, Staff Director, Senate Aeronautical and Space Sciences Committee, to say that I had gotten word that Charles Lombard, Minority Counsel for the Committee, would call me shortly to request that he receive an Agency briefing. Mr. Gehrig indicated this involves something of a problem in that Lombard is trying to set himself up as an independent staff director for the Minority. I suggested that in view of this, Lombard be briefed jointly with Gehrig if and when Lombard had obtained the proper clearances. Gehrig said this would be a satisfactory solution and requested we proceed with the clearances.

In a later conversation with Mr. Lombard, I explained that additional clearances would be necessary for the briefing he requested, and as soon as these had come through we would be glad to brief him and Gehrig jointly. Lombard seemed satisfied with this solution.

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5. [] Mr. C. B. Morrison, in the office of Senator Allen J. Ellender, advised that the movie film which Senator Ellender took on his trip in 1956 and which he mentioned to the Director at our last budget session was available. I picked up six reels of this film today which will be sent to Graphics for screening.

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6. [] In response to his request, I left with Ed Braswell, Chief Counsel, Senate Armed Services Committee, a blind memo commenting on the accuracy of the Tad Szulc column in the New York Times on the Soviet military aircraft programs (specifically the "Backfire"). Braswell is very much interested in this and asked if we could provide him with data on the characteristics and performance of the "Backfire."

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I advised Mr. Braswell that the Director has no objection to our passing to the State Department the basic paper on Laos which we prepared for Braswell's and Senator Stennis' use. Braswell said this was perfectly all right with him.

I advised Mr. Braswell of a call I received yesterday from John Lehman, of the White House staff, on a letter which the President has received from Senator Stennis. (See Memo for Record of 7 September.)

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7. [] Miss Karen Rothrock, in the office of Representative James Fulton (R., Pa.), without identifying the applicant, asked me if I could clarify the reasons why an applicant was not offered a position and in this connection read me a copy of the reject letter sent by

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[] I told her that based on the information she had given me, I could only assume that the reason was as [] had stated--that we just did not have a suitable vacancy and that she would appreciate that we have many more applicants than vacancies. This seemed to satisfy Miss Rothrock as she said this was what she had expected.

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SOVIET SAID TO FLY BIG NEW BOMBER; POLICY SHIFT SEEN

**Supersonic Craft Believed
to Mark Departure From
Stress on Missiles**

By TAD SZULC

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 4—The Soviet Union has test-flown a swing-wing supersonic strategic bomber that Western military intelligence specialists believe marks the emergence of an entirely new Soviet air weapons system.

Although the Nixon Administration has been aware for at least a year that the Russians have been developing the plane and that prototypes of the first Soviet intercontinental bomber have been tested in flight probably since last March, the Defense Department has maintained secrecy about what it knows of the new plane.

But data concerning the new plane obtained from intelligence quarters in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization indicate that the bomber — designed to fly at twice the speed of sound and equipped for low-level penetration of enemy defenses — could become fully operational late in 1973 if Moscow has already made the decision for military production.

A Change in Trend

The apparently successful development of the plane, which NATO calls Backfire, has profound implications for the strategic power balance between the United States and the Soviet Union, for the arms limitation talks now under way in Helsinki and for United States domestic political and economic problems.

It signifies a change by the Soviet Union away from the trend of recent years when Moscow and Washington seemed to be de-emphasizing manned strategic bombers in favor of ballistic missiles and sophisticated nuclear warheads.

The only strategic jet bomber in the United States arsenal is the subsonic B-52, designed some 20 years ago.

While preliminary work on the swing-wing B-1, conceived as a replacement for the B-52, began last year, this plane could not become operational before 1978, assuming that both the Nixon Administration and Congress authorize further development programs.

B-1 Controversial

The B-1, which is expected to cost at least \$11-billion to be fully engineered, has become the center of major political controversy here. The Air Force ultimately wants to order 240 of the B-1's.

In arguing for the B-1, the Defense Department has nevertheless refrained from announcing that the Russians have developed the Backfire. There have been no published

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reports in the West on the Backfire's existence, which is believed to be known only to high-level NATO officials and the United States Government.

The B-1 would have characteristics and performance similar to the Backfire even though the United States is at least five years behind the Soviet Union in developing new strategic bombers.

But a Defense Department spokesman refused yesterday to discuss the Backfire on the ground that it was "off bounds" as a sensitive intelligence matter.

U.S. Program Accelerated

Other officials declined to say whether last year's reported discovery by Western intelligence that the Russians were far advanced in their new strategic bomber was the reason for the Defense Department's accelerated program to develop the B-1.

A secret report issued last March by the General Accounting Office, the Congressional watchdog agency, charged that the Pentagon had accelerated work on the B-1, ignoring high costs and accepting lower performance standards.

The Backfire is believed by NATO specialists to have been planned as both an aerial launcher for nuclear guided missiles and as a classical "free-fall" carrier for hydrogen bombs.

These specialists believe that the Backfire could best be used

against targets in Western Europe and Asia, notably in China, although it would have a high-altitude attack capability against the United States if it were based in the Arctic regions or refueled in flight.

Apparently Designed by Tupolev

The Backfire, NATO experts said, appears to have been designed by 82-year-old Andrei N. Tupolev, the Soviet Union's leading aircraft designer, who also developed the TU-144 supersonic transport.

This conclusion was drawn because a backfire prototype was first observed by NATO intelligence in July, 1970, on the ground near the Tupolev aircraft plant at Kazan in Central Asia.

The Backfire also has a structural resemblance to the TU-22 medium bomber. Like the TU-22, the Backfire is 131 feet long and is believed to be powered by two Kuznetsov turbofan afterburn engines mounted on the aft fuselage. These engines, each with a 26,880-pound thrust, are also used on the TU-144 supersonic transport.

U.S. Swing-Wing Better

The Backfire's swing-wing angle is said to be shorter than the angle planned for the United States B-1. Western experts said that only the outer section of the Backfire's wing is movable. On the B-1, the whole wing would be retractable.

The advantage of a swing-wing design is that it allows an aircraft to cruise at high altitudes—presumably above 50,

000 feet—with less fuel consumption.

The Soviet Union has had several years of experience in with the Sukhoi 7 and 7B fighters.

The Backfire, therefore, is the first swing-wing strategic bomber ever produced. The Soviet TU-22 is a fixed-wing bomber.

Based on the first visual observation of the Backfire in flight last March in the area of the Ramenskoye test center near Moscow, NATO experts believe that Soviet engineers have probably solved most of the development problems.

B-1 Order Reduced

The first flight by a B-1 prototype is scheduled for the summer of 1974, and complete flight testing for air-worthiness, performance and flight load is planned for January, 1977.

To reduce expenditures, the Pentagon has cut the experimental order from seven prototypes to three.

NATO experts believe that the Backfire is now undergoing weapons testing after its successful test flights.

No details are available as to the Backfire's armament, but the presumption is that in addition to standard nuclear bombs it will be equipped with the Soviet equivalent of the United States nuclear air-to-surface Short Range Attack Missile (SRAM).

The SRAM is also controversial here. Its development cost has risen from \$330,000 each, as estimated in 1965, to nearly \$1-million this year. The Air Force plans to order 1,900 of these missiles even though the current cost is exclusive of nuclear warheads.

The backfire is also expected to be armed with short-range and long-range air-to-air bombem defense missiles similar to those being developed in the United States.

Subsonic Flight Sought

To achieve low-level penetration of Western defenses—one of the Backfire's principal potential missions is subsonic flight—the Soviet bomber is believed by NATO officials to carry 1,000-mile-range turbofan-powered decoy devices loaded with electronic jammers to confuse radar tracking. Similar devices are being developed here for the B-1.

Western specialists speculated that because of its low-level penetration capability, the

Backfire may be assigned to the Soviet Navy for action against aircraft carriers and other warships as well as to the Soviet Long-Range Aviation for strategic and tactical missions.

Because of intense heat at supersonic speeds, the leading edges of the Backfire's wings and sections of the fuselage are said to be made of titanium, a heat-resistant metal.

But in order to reduce costs, the use of titanium planned for the B-1 was reduced this year from 45 to 20 per cent. The precise titanium ratio on the Backfire is not known here.

Specialists said, however, that if excessive cost-cutting is applied to the B-1, it may be inferior to the Backfire.

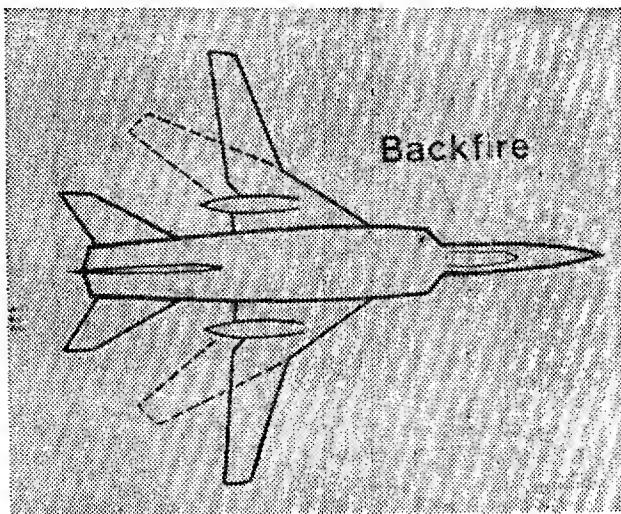
The General Accounting Office said in its report that the defense department inprogramming the B-1, "has not ensued elimination of past problems of major weapons acquisition—cost growth, scheduled slippage and/or performance degradation."

The reports of the Backfire's test flights came within days of the conclusion by the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London that both the United States and the Soviet Union are cutting back on their manned strategic bomber forces while concentrating on intercontinental missiles. The institute issued its conclusions on Thursday in its annual military-balance survey.

The emergence of the Backfire appears to support the arguments of many top United States Air Force commanders notably at the Strategic Air Command, that the United States must not altogether sacrifice its manned bomber force in favor of missilery. The Strategic Air Command's fleet of B-52's was reduced in the last year from 405 to 560 planes.

In this controversy, the Pentagon settled for a mixture of missiles and bombers, with Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard strongly advocating the development of the B-1 to sustain a manned bomber force through the nineteen eighties.

The B-1 program is opposed however, by the White House Office of Management and Budget as well as by a bloc of liberal Senators.



Drawing of the Soviet swing-wing bomber called "Backfire." The dotted lines show the wings were retracted.